



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

For immediate release

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2006 cooling assistance applications accepted June 15 – Aug. 15 *Assistance available for needy families this summer*

Richmond – The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Energy Assistance Program will accept applications for cooling assistance from Thursday, June 15, through Tuesday, August 15, at local departments of social services statewide.

“Virginia’s children, disabled and elderly Virginians who are living in a low-income household need assistance cooling their homes,” said VDSS Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr. “Virginia’s intense summer heat and humidity can be very dangerous for them, and we want them to know that this program can help them.”

Assistance is available to households that include a child or children under age six, a disabled individual, or an adult age 60 and over who meet income and eligibility requirements.

Cooling assistance can be used to assist families and individuals with:

- payment of electric bills to operate cooling equipment
- payment of security deposits for electricity to operate cooling equipment
- repair of a central air conditioning system or heat pump
- purchase of a whole-house fan, including ceiling or attic fans
- the purchase and installation of one window unit air conditioner for households where there is no unit or where the unit must be replaced

The maximum gross monthly income to qualify for cooling assistance is \$1,062 before taxes for a household of one and \$2,167 before taxes for a family of four.

The Energy Assistance Program is funded by the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program block grant. The fuel component has been in existence since 1979 and serves approximately 100,000 households each year across the Commonwealth, while the crisis component serves approximately 18,000 households. During the summer of 2005, the cooling component served approximately 40,000 households in Virginia.

To learn more visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ea/index.html>. Families and individuals must apply at their local department of social services by August 15. ***For Norfolk residents, contact the Department of Human Services Cooling Assistance Program at 664-7550 or 664-7517.***

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